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SUBJECT: WORKING DINNER WITH BAGHDAD MAYOR AND  
ACCOMPANYING DELEGATION

1. (SBU) Summary: On October 26, 2005, IRMO Director Ambassador Daniel Speckhard, MG Robert Heine, BG O'Neill, Ferris Nesheiwat, LTC William Duddleston met with the Mayor of Baghdad, Saber Al-Esawi, and accompanying delegation, Amer Al-Saadi, Deputy Mayor for Managerial Affairs; Mohammad Amanuel, Deputy Mayor for Municipalities; and Naeem Ab'oub the Director General of Sadr City baladia/district, to discuss the reconstruction efforts and future plans for Baghdad. The Mayor outlined his immediate priorities and his long term vision for the city. His immediate concerns are: 1) fighting corruption, 2) increasing the efficiency of the Mayoralty of Baghdad ("Amanat"), and 3) solving the solid waste/trash problem in Baghdad. The Mayor emphasized the importance of close and continued cooperation between the US Embassy and the Amanat, and described a mechanism for such cooperation. He described the financial situation of the Amanat and its need for support as there is little coming from independent revenue or from the Interim Iraqi Government (ITG). He also outlined the Amanat's efforts to establish contacts and bilateral contacts with international donors. He considers the next three months critical for his success as Mayor and would direct all the Amanat's energies and resources to accomplishing the three goals outlined above. End Summary.

Close And Continued Cooperation Between US Embassy And  
The Amanat

2. (SBU) The Mayor suggested the establishment of a joint US-Amanat committee to be tasked with overseeing all the reconstruction efforts for the city of Baghdad, and the planning of any future projects. Such a committee, he argues, would prevent the current duplication of efforts by some reconstruction agencies, streamline the reconstruction process, and would allow for better supervision and quality control of the finalized project. The local district and neighborhood councils, the Mayor emphasized, can be very effective in selecting projects and monitoring the progress of the contractors. Alternatively, he submits, the USG risks not realizing the full potential of the enormous effort and funds, which he admits are being expended in the city.

3. (SBU) Director Speckhard asked what the Mayor would recommend to assure that future reconstruction efforts be properly credited to the US people and the Mayor advised that better media coverage and handling is needed, but equally important is the need to tackle the immediate issue of trash accumulation and sewer collapses throughout the city so that the citizens can feel immediate tangible results.

The Current Financial Situation Of The Amanat

4. (SBU) The Mayor stated that the Amanat has but \$12 million for the remainder of the year, which allows for nothing but payment of salaries and other basic functions. The current financial situation is not conducive to any developmental efforts by the Amanat. He requested the USG help in facilitating the requisition of funds from the ITG, which he said is not doing its part to support the city.

5. (SBU) The Mayor described the unique position Baghdad has as a local government of its own and responsible for most of the essential services (water, sewer, solid waste, and roads) for its citizens, without any assistance from other ministries like the Ministry of Municipalities and Public Work. Aid provided to those ministries, therefore, does not filter down to Baghdad.

6. (SBU) The Mayor urged the USG to consider having a separate agenda and a dedicated office within the embassy to exclusively handle the city's reconstruction and infrastructure planning efforts, as

they are unique to the city and independent from any such efforts done for the rest of the country. The Mayor expressed his frustration that even though 25% of Iraq's population lives in Baghdad, some cities receive more funds from the ITG than it does.

17. (SBU) He stated that \$100 million were allocated to the city by the Cabinet but were cut in half by the Ministry of Finance, and the remaining half was forwarded to the Ministry of Planning, which in turn used it instead to finance unfinished projects for other ministries.

18. (SBU) The Amanat is pursuing funding from international donors to augment the funding it receives from the USG and the ITG. To that end the Mayor will be visiting Amman this week to hold discussions with the World Bank, the Japanese Government, and the United Nations. He will be accompanied by Mr. Ferris Nesheiwat, IRMO Amanat Liaison Officer.

#### The Road Ahead -----

19. (SBU) The Mayor indicated his intent to expend all the resources of the Amanat in the next two months month to resolve the problems of trash accumulation and sewer collapses across the city. These two problems are considered by him to be the most obvious indication of the failure of the Amanat to deliver meaningful services to the city's population; therefore, he is determined to tackle them. He plans to put the ITG in a situation where it is forced to recognize the need for additional financing to support the essential services of the city. The current situation of maintaining the status quo is not acceptable by him.

10. (SBU) the City is already taking the initiative in tackling the issue described in point 8 by taking over the trash collection and transfer process in the three of the eleven baladias/districts that comprise Baghdad. The other eight baladias will continue to be served by the private contractor hired by the 3ID. The Mayor requested that the 3ID request the contractor to move all the resources it will save from the three baladias to the other eight it still runs so that better service is provided. The City is to take over the collection process for the entire city by March 1, 2006.

11. (SBU) Brigadier General O'Neill, who represented the 3ID in the meeting, supported the Amanat's move and expressed belief that the Amanat is the most qualified entity to handle this issue as it knows the city best.

12. (SBU) All parties from the US side agreed that the Amanat should be more involved with the supervision and monitoring of the reconstruction efforts as it provides invaluable input through first hand knowledge of the city's issues and needs, especially through the net work of the local district and neighborhood councils.

13. (SBU) The Mayor emphasized that the USG is doing excellent work and he expressed appreciation for the efforts of all involved whether as civilians or uniformed. He requested our continued support and cooperation, because without it, he will not be successful in achieving his plans and ideas for the city of Baghdad.